Do It To Death

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/64516366.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category:	Gen
Fandom:	Shingeki no Kyojin | Attack on Titan
Relationship:	Levi Ackerman & Eren Yeager
Characters:	Eren Yeager, Levi Ackerman, Mikasa Ackerman, Armin Arlert, Erwin Smith, Hange Zoë
Additional Tags:	Blackmail, Exhaustion, Disobeying Orders, but for a valid reason, Guns, Canon-Typical Violence, Passively Caring Levi Ackerman
Language:	English
Series:	Part 4 of n ways to carry eren jaeger
Stats:	Published: 2025-04-07 Words: 3,403 Chapters: 1/1

Do It To Death

by nike_of_samothrace

Summary

Right under Levi's nose, Eren is kidnapped and forced to use his titan form to destroy the titans over the walls, but it's not as rewarding as it would seem.

Notes

hopefully this little blurb brightens up your monday. it's exam time for me (when is it not?) and after that, I graduate. I'm gonna have all this spare time. whatever will I do with myself??? write? we will see. we will see.

enjoy the work, guys :)

Levi followed a schedule. That was probably why it was so easy for them to be ambushed.

Breakfast at 8. Training, then some one-on-one with Eren, then lunch, a quick break, more training, supper, and then wind down. The thing is, that day, they never made it to lunch.

Levi and Eren were walking back from the stables as they normally did when splitting up from the rest of the soldiers. They were on their way to Hange, who was on the second floor of the castle, waiting. But there was someone else waiting, blocking the way inside, and the first thing they did was point a gun at Levi.

“Shift, and he’s dead.”

Eren stood unmoving, his gaze unwavering onto Levi and the rifle pointed against him. Frozen as two strong hands graced his shoulders and pushed him to his knees.

“Eren,” Levi said, “Run.”

Eren did not run.

Levi’s face turned deadly. “Fucking *run*, Eren! Run or shift! That’s an order!”

Run? If Eren ran, Levi got shot. That was made pretty clear. Humanity’s Strongest would die, and they would never beat the titans. That logic made it easy for Eren to make his next move.

If they survived this, Eren was so fucked.

The prickly brush of rope met Eren’s wrists, looping around and tightly tying his hands behind his back.

Eren let it happen. *Suicidal bastard*, he heard somewhere in the back of his head.

The same hands that pushed him down roughly grabbed the fabric of the back of his shirt, pulling him back to his feet. When he looked back at Levi, he found that his captain was not looking back at him. Instead, his gaze was focused furiously on the ground.

Was it disappointment?

Was Eren making the wrong choice?

That look was all Eren focused on while the barrel of a gun was pushed against his back, and a bang cracked through the air.

He fell forwards, tasting grass. The impact to his head was nothing compared to the electric pain shooting around his heart where he was shot.

His body was on fire, falling apart.

Eren thought he heard Levi shout as the world faded away, but there wasn’t another gunshot. He held on to that.

Eren awoke to sunlight pounding down on his closed eyelids.

There were no trees or houses when he opened his eyes. Instead, there was nothing but the blue sky and three men towering over him.

So, he was on the ground. But the ground *wasn't* the ground- it was hard stone.

He was on top of the walls.

Eren sat up.

"Woah there, kid," one man said, putting his boot on Eren's chest, effectively sending him back down onto the surface of the wall. "Wait just a minute, now."

Someone was suddenly behind Eren, with an arm wrapped around his front, holding a knife to his chest. He dragged Eren to his feet, keeping the blade steady.

What were they going to do with a *knife*? He was a titan shifter. He'd survived getting *shot*. A knife would do nothing.

Eren decided to be the first to speak. "What are we doing here?"

The man who had shoved Eren down grinned slyly. "You're here to do us a favour. To do *humanity* a favour. You're going to kill all the titans you can."

"I'm not doing your dirty work," Eren seethed. "Where's Levi now, huh? What are you going to do to make me listen?"

"You think we don't have people close to him, people he trusts, just waiting for the command to kill? You'd be sorely mistaken, boy."

Eren's composure broke, only slightly, but enough to be seen. How could he be sure that was a lie? He had no rebuttal to that. What was he able to do, *tell* somebody? How?

The tall man leaned in. Eren could smell him, scent unpleasant, as he whispered in his face. "What are you gonna do, kid? Your job, or are you gonna get your hero killed?"

Eren grit his teeth. There really was no way out of this.

"My job."

The knife that was lightly pressed to Eren's collarbone was plunged beneath his skin and dragged from one side to the other in a long, jagged pull. The same hand that did that gave his back a push, and sent Eren over the edge of the walls.

He realised that he did have a choice. He didn't *have* to shift.

But he was Eren Jaeger. Of course he would shift. Of course he would fight.

So, the two feet that landed on the ground were that of a titan, steam mixing with dust from where Eren had ended up.

There were already titans here.

Eren was so fucking conflicted. He *wanted* to fight. He wanted to kill the titans. But he wanted to do it on his own accord. He didn't want to be forced into it. Like a slave.

Like someone who was not free.

The first titan approached fast.

Eren grabbed it by the neck- it was five metres, tops. He pulled its head by the hair, ripping it off its body, and threw it over the wall. Over the heads of his captors, as a warning.

And a gunshot ripped through the air.

It hit Eren's titan, but he felt it no more than a scratch. He guessed it was supposed to be more of a threat than anything.

Well, it worked. Eren stopped, prepared himself, and ran for the next titan.

Erwin, Hange and Levi sat in a room.

It was the *situation room*, as Erwin liked to call it. It was compromised of a singular long table, which he sat at the head of, with Levi and Hange on both sides. They have had many conversations here. Some including Eren, and what to do with the knowledge that humans could shift into titans. Yes, this table had heard a lot.

"I told him to run," Levi explained, arms crossed. "The brat didn't listen. They shot him and they took him with their gun on me until they were out of sight."

The pen in Erwin's hand swept across the page of the incident report. "So they kept him alive. He started healing, correct?"

Levi nodded. "Not without a fucking bullet inside of him."

Erwin frowned, but Hange shrugged. "Sometimes bodies heal and reject things inside them. Eren may or may not have done that to the bullet."

"Doesn't matter if we never find him again," Levi said. "We need to do more than just send search parties to neighbouring towns. We're doing nothing sitting here."

Erwin politely raised his hand, signalling Levi to stop. "Just wait. I have a feeling."

A knock on the door sounded. Levi was speechless as Erwin abandoned the report to open the door, where a red-haired Garrison soldier stood.

“Deploy to Wall Rose,” the soldier said between huffs. “There’s been titan activity reported, and people seen on the wall. I have the directions here.”

“Eren,” Erwin said, immediately turning to order Levi and Hange up. “We need to set out immediately. Hange, alert your unit. Levi?”

Levi was already out of his seat, ready to go. “What?”

Erwin’s gaze lingered for a split second that he dared to waste. “Ride with me. I don’t think they’ll kill you. Their goal with Eren is to defeat the titans, and you play a big part in that.”

Levi scowled. “You want to risk my life because you *think*?”

Erwin shrugged. “You could also stay here.”

Levi was already moving. “I’ll meet you in the stables.”

It had been hours.

Eren’s bones were sore. His bones, *and* his titan’s, even though they were one in the same. He had stopped being the aggressor a while ago. Now, his movements were laced with lethargy, and he only killed titans that sought him out.

When too long would go by without a kill, gunshots would rip through the air, and Eren would try to show some more life.

He was doing it. He was living his dream, killing every titan. But he felt so *empty*.

A three metre and a five metre were stumbling towards him, bumping into each other out of what must have been excitement. Eren leaned down on one knee grabbing both their heads and smashed them together. He ripped at the skin of their napes for good measure.

That was two more to what must have been a hundred, but felt like a thousand.

Every hit shattered the muscle in Eren’s arms. Every step felt like he was sinking into the ground. At first, he started out with cries of aggression and agitation, but even those had been downgraded to measly huffs of spite.

Getting beaten to a pulp in the courtroom was better than this.

The members of the Survey Corps were about ten strong, including the messenger from the Garrison. They approached two more members of the Garrison below Wall Rose that were with the first, because they looked awfully relieved to see the return of their comrade.

“They’re up on the wall,” the Garrison member said after bringing her horse to a stop. Erwin pulled up next to her, Levi and Hange close behind.

“We’ll ascend,” the Commander ordered, peering up the wall. “We’ll have to use our gear. Hange, order one of your soldiers to stay down here with the Garrison troops.”

“Done!” Hange called, and trotted over to the rest of the troops.

Erwin turned to the messenger. “You’ve done well. You might be more help on the ground than the wall, in case we need to make any calls for aid or backup. I believe we will be fine, though, if it’s just the three of them.”

“More than happy to stay on the ground, sir,” the messenger said, saluting to Erwin, who nodded in approval.

“Everyone ready?” Erwin called. “They haven’t noticed us yet. We go up at the same time. Rifles at the ready and trained on the enemy. On three.”

“One!”

The shuffling of gear sounded, as every soldier got into position.

“Two!”

Hange nudged Levi. “Race you!”

“Three!”

The sound of gas shooting and lines zipping filled the air as the soldiers flew to the wall. Levi didn’t pay attention to where Hange was as he scaled to the top first, pulling his rifle over his back and clicking the safety off, training it on the man in the middle of the three who were lounging on the side of the wall. “Freeze.”

More members of the Survey Corps joined Levi, directing their rifles before the men could even stand up. The barrels of ten guns were focused on the group, and slowly, the man Levi had first put his gun to slowly raised his hands.

His friends followed suit.

Levi moved closer to the three men. It was crazy how much a gun made a difference in who held the power. “You get one shot. Where’s Eren?”

The middle man gulped and pointed. “Over. Over the wall.”

Levi hooked his rifle to his back at once, paced over to the edge of the wall and peered below. There was no Eren, but there *was* a fifteen-metre titan fighting one just as big as him on the ground below.

Levi needed no further instruction. He leaped from the wall and shot his ODM gear into the side of the wall, descending three quarters of the way down. From here, he could get a better look at the battle below.

It was a grotesque titan Eren was fighting, with its gums exposed and eyes wide. And it looked like it was actually *winning*. It had the offensive, making attempts at a bite only for it to be foiled by a weak push back from Eren's end.

Weak was hardly the word for it. There was barely a sign of life in that drained shove to the other titan, which went in for another bite. Eren raised his arm to block it, but this time, instead of being pushed back, the titan bit off Eren's arm.

Levi had seen enough.

He jumped from the wall, and landed solidly on Eren's shoulder. The titan shifter didn't even react.

"One second," Levi said, unaware if Eren could hear. He shot both wires into the eyes of the titan and flipped over its head, swords out as he landed on the nape and swiped beneath the skin.

The titan began to steam, so Levi was quick in jumping back to Eren's shoulder. Eren was on his knees now, one hand pressing into the ground, the other resting on his leg.

"Come on out," Levi said with a jump, expertly sliding both blades down the nape of Eren's titan. When he could see Eren, he sheathed his blades and pulled him free of the muscle and sinew that kept him bound to the tired form of his titan.

Tired titan, tired Eren, it seemed. Levi hoisted Eren over his shoulder, and with one hand keeping him from falling, he used the other to maneuver his way back up the wall, where the three men were being handcuffed by Hange's squad.

With no threat to Eren's safety, Levi set him down on the stone that was warmed by the sun. Eren showed no signs of consciousness- not even after Levi slapped the side of his cheek and called his name three times.

The markings on his face were long and unforgiving, and Levi hadn't missed how covered in sweat his soldier was. Overworked to the absolute maximum, and had he been down there much longer, Levi didn't want to even think about what would have happened to him.

"Oi," Levi growled, approaching Hange's squad and the three men. "Just how long was he down there for?"

The man at the side looked up at Levi petulantly, like he was the winner in this mess. "How long have we had him?"

Levi turned away and walked past Erwin. "Those shitstains better rot."

They would, Levi knew, but only after he filled out a hell of a lot of paperwork.

Waiting.

Waiting sucked.

In this case, Levi had been waiting by Eren's bedside for almost a day. Checking his watch, it had been… nineteen hours since Levi cut Eren out of his titan, and the boy had shown no sign of waking up. Levi had come and gone, sure, but it would never be long before his curiosity got the best of him and he returned to Eren.

Two times ago, he had gotten his report papers to fill out. The last time he left was to get a cup of tea, which was now sitting on the windowsill, cooling off. He would be content for a while, now.

Levi had almost fallen asleep when he heard Eren stir. His eyes twitched around the titan markings before fluttering open.

The first thing Levi did was give Eren a cup of water. It took Eren a minute for awareness to settle in, but when it did, he reached gingerly for the water, having gone almost a day without it. Or had it been more than a day?

Eren sat with the cup of water in his lap, and he elected to look into it rather than at his captain, who seemed to be waiting to say something.

As Eren sat, he remembered. Remembered fighting, the sting of the knife along his chest, the gun firing into him.

And remembered ignoring Levi in order to keep him alive.

But Eren almost didn't care about any of that. He could still feel the ache pulsing in his legs from standing so long. His head was still a bit fuzzy and hot, so he took another sip of water to quell the warmth.

"You don't look too hot," Levi said, catching Eren's attention back from the water, and forcing the two of them to have a conversation.

Eren wanted to argue that yes, actually, he was *very* hot. But before he could get a word in edgewise, Levi stuck a handheld mirror up to Eren, whose reflection had seen better days. The red streaks were dark and angry at Eren for having been used for so long.

"That's what happens," Levi began, "when you go against what I say."

"I didn't do anything bad!" Eren protested.

"You disobeyed direct orders," Levi corrected. "That counts as bad. It doesn't matter what happened after. It's my job to keep you in check, brat, and I can't do that with you running around doing whatever you want."

"They would have shot you, sir."

"They didn't," Levi said. "In fact, Erwin was right. They wouldn't have shot me in the first place, because they know how much humanity needs me. We just didn't know that then. So one day in isolation. It'd be more, but we don't have that kind of time around here."

Eren felt helpless. "I made the right choice, and you're punishing me for it?"

“You made the right choice, and now you’re dealing with the consequences,” Levi said. “As your guardian, you need to listen to me. But as a person… you did good.”

Levi pushed himself out of the chair, reports under one arm and tea in hand. “Isolation starting tomorrow. Reflect, brat. You can get more sleep now if you need it, or meet in the mess hall soon. It’s almost lunch.”

And with that, he was out the door.

Eren chose sleep. He *was* going to get out of bed, but had told himself *five more minutes*… and the rest was history. When he woke up next, it was dark. He had officially screwed up his circadian rhythm.

The door to Eren’s cell appeared to be locked shut. There was a tray of food on his bedside table, though, so someone had been in here. Some dry bread and soup that had gone cold. It was likely supper from last night, but he was hungry, so he ate it.

It wasn’t too bad, besides being cold. He couldn’t remember the last time he’d eaten- he hadn’t eaten all day yesterday, and the day before was when he was taken, when all he had was breakfast. So it had been nearly two days.

Eren stared at the wall. Time went by slowly, and all he could do was reflect. He supposed that was the point of isolation.

Would he change his mind, if it were to happen again? He wanted to say yes. Wanted to say he’d be able to get a better reading on the situation, a better chance to call a bluff. But there was no confidence in his answer.

Isolation wasn’t really the right term for Eren’s punishment, because after breakfast was delivered, Levi came down to check on him, and then moments later, Mikasa and Armin were standing outside his door.

“The basement door was left unlocked,” Mikasa explained. “We figured that meant we could come see you.”

That was a stretch of a coincidence. Levi didn’t usually forget things.

Mikasa leaned against the bars and extended her arms. “Can we… hug?”

Eren sighed and got up, embracing Mikasa through the cool metal rails. Armin sat down as close as he could, and was joined by Mikasa and Eren, and together they sat on both sides of the cell.

“Are you okay?” and “What was it like?” came from both of Eren’s friends at the same time.

“I’m okay,” Eren said, regarding Mikasa and the look of concern painting her face. Then he turned to a curious Armin. “They wanted me to fight titans, so I did. I should have *wanted* to, but because they were forcing me to, I just… didn’t.”

“That’s fine,” Armin consoled, sliding his hand through the bars. “You had other priorities than titan fighting at the time, which makes sense why you didn’t want to fight. You just wanted to get away.”

Eren absorbed Armin’s words in a new light. “Yeah,” he said. “That’s actually exactly why I felt like that.”

“I can’t believe they’re punishing you,” Mikasa said, her cheeks flaming. “I tried to talk to Levi. But he just said that you didn’t follow orders.”

Eren shrugged. “I didn’t. And honestly, I kind of like having the day off. Now that I’ve… *reflected*, I know what to do next time.”

Armin leaned in. “What’s that?”

“The exact same thing.”

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